SEW NEWS
The Trusted Sewing Source
ESTABLISHED IN 1980

SWEET PLEATS BLOUSE PATTERN

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SWEET PLEATS BLOUSE

BY KATALIN LOVASZ

Create an easy-to-sew blouse that combines a simple silhouette with billowing sleeves and hand-sewn cartridge pleats. Updated with a modern V-neckline and a slightly cropped silhouette, this design offers flowy, feminine comfort and sweet details.

CARTRIDGE PLEATING TECHNIQUE

The cartridge pleating method works best with a mediumweight fabric that keeps folds and presses well, such as linen, cotton broadcloth, drapier quilting cottons or cotton/linen blends. Anything slippery or thin won't keep the shape of the pleats. Some hemp blends also work well. In general, it's best to use fabric with a bit of weight to help the pleats maintain definition.

While not absolutely necessary, first practice this pleating technique on a swatch to learn how the pleats work and to achieve even pleating.

Download the Sweet Pleats Blouse pattern at sewnews.com/web_extras until March 31, 2018. Purchase the pattern after the expiration at shopsewitall.com.

From scrap fabric, cut two of pattern pieces H and J. H will serve as the background piece and J as the piece to be attached to it and pleated.

Fold the lower edge of H ¼" toward the right side; press.

Fold the upper edge of J ¼" toward the wrong side; press. Fold another ¼" toward the wrong side; press **(1).**

Mark the following on the pattern pieces:

- the beginning and end of the cartridge pleating on both H and J;
- on J, between the two pleating marks, draw one line 1/16" from the upper folded edge and another line ¼" below it;
- mark a line ½" inch from the folded lower edge of H **(2).**

Lay J over H, both with right sides up, so that the folded edge of J aligns with the marked line on H, enclosing all raw edges. Pin at the marked pleating lines.

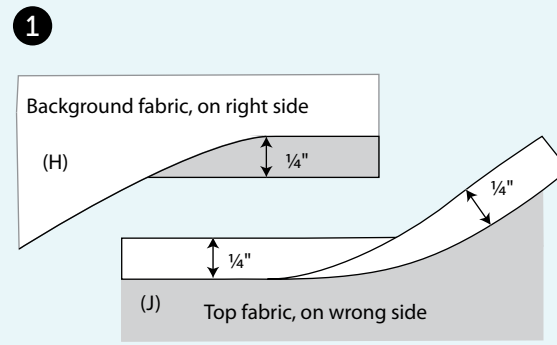
Beginning from the fabric outer edges, one edge at a time, stitch the pieces together up to the pleating line, along the upper folded edge of J. Pivot and stitch along the pleating line. Pivot again, stitch ½" down from the upper folded edge, and stitch back to the fabric edge, making sure to catch the edge of H **(3).**

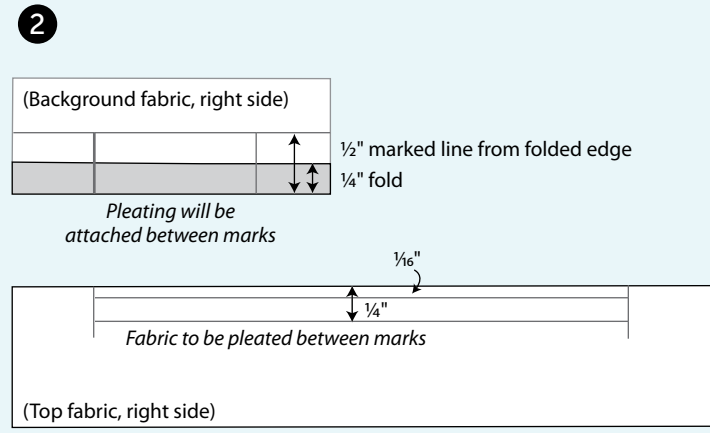
Thread and knot a length of hand-sewing thread, and bury the knotted end at one edge of the area to be pleated at the marked ¼" line. Stitch across the loose portion of J by picking up a tiny portion of fabric first from above the 1/16" line marked, then lay J over H, both with right sides up, so that the folded edge of J aligns with the marked line on H, enclosing all raw edges. Pin at the marked pleating lines.

Beginning from the fabric outer edges, one edge at a time, stitch the pieces together up to the pleating line, along the upper folded edge of J. Pivot and stitch along the pleating line. Pivot again, stitch ½" down from the upper folded edge, and stitch back to the fabric edge, making sure to catch the edge of H **(3).**

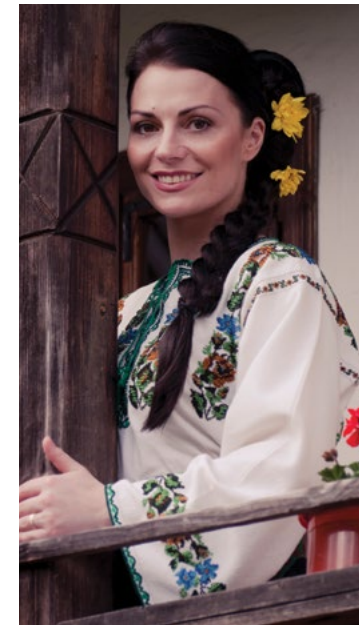
Thread and knot a length of hand-sewing thread, and bury the knotted end at one edge of the area to be pleated at the marked ¼" line. Stitch across the loose portion of J by picking up a tiny portion of fabric first from above the 1/16" line marked, then ¼" away diagonally along the ¼" line **(4).**

Proceed across the area to be pleated on J, so that the fabric is covered with little 'V' shapes spaced as evenly as possible.





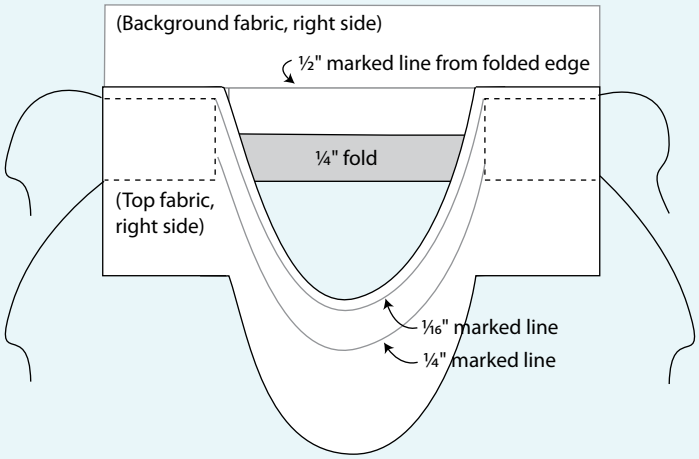
HISTORY IN THE MAKING



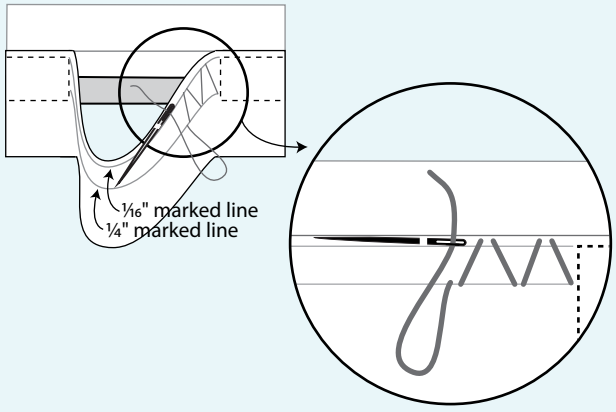
Getty Images/Marius Muscalu

The blouse's sleeves echo the folkwear tops and chemises of the traditional costumes of rural Romania, Ukraine, parts of Hungary, Slovakia and Poland. These garments were often decorated with elaborate embroidery that takes many months to complete. The blouses were traditionally sewn using only rectangles and triangles, easy-to-cut shapes that use fabric efficiently, and much of the shaping and fitting was achieved with gathers. Because every part of the blouse merited embellishment, rural seamstresses came up with clever folding and stitching methods to create cartridge pleats that matched the embroidery's decorative nature.

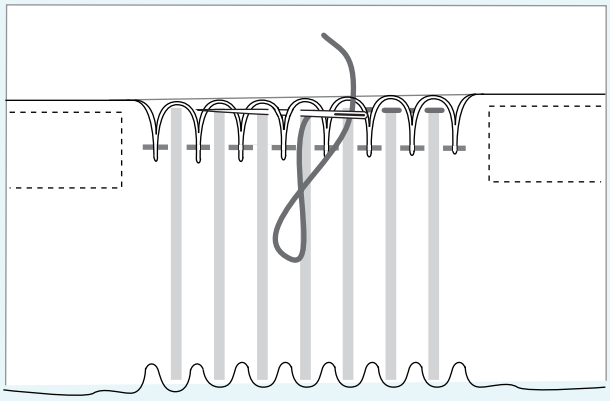
3


(Background fabric, right side)
½" marked line from folded edge
¼" fold
(Top fabric, right side)
1/16" marked line
¼" marked line

4


1/16" marked line
¼" marked line

5



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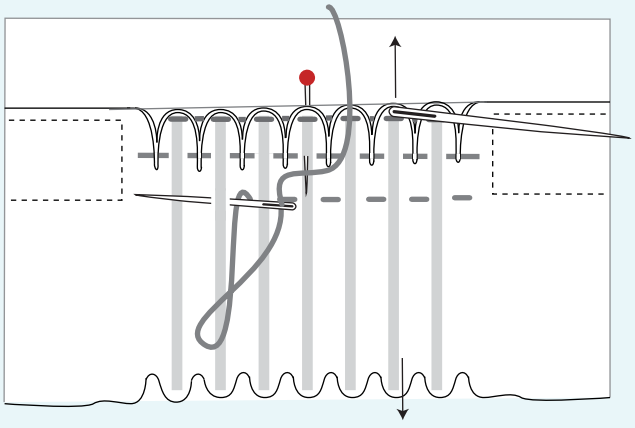

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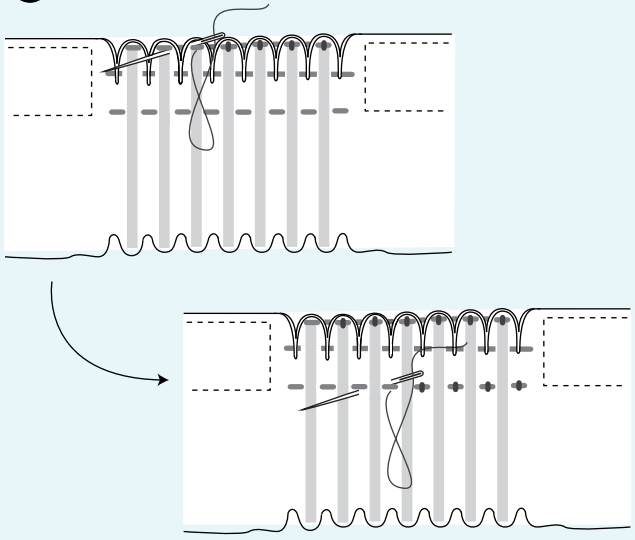

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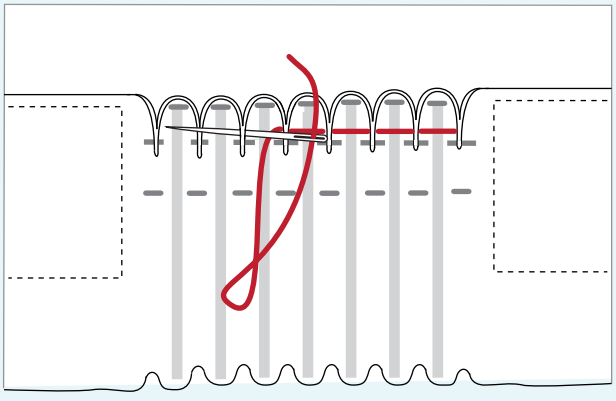

To create the pleats, pull the end of the thread taut, so the gathered fabric matches the area on H where the pleats will be attached. Tug gently until the two sets of points are aligned and the folded edge of the fabric begins to form little roof shapes over the individual pleats.

To straighten the pleats, hand stitch a line across the gathered upper edge, pulling the tops of the shapes into one line with the thread **(5).**

Distribute the pleats as evenly as possible; pin in place if needed. Using hand-sewing thread, stitch another straight line ½" below the gathered upper edge for added stability. Use the blunt end of the needle to further define the pleated shapes **(6).**

Using hand-sewing thread, stitch the inside tips of the pleated shapes to H, working along the marked line and passing through the stabilizing thread, creating tiny cross shapes. Stitch the stabilizing thread ½" below the gathered upper edge to the lower edge of H **(7).**

Using contrasting Perle cotton, sew a line of running stitch through each cartridge pleat shape, ensuring the stitching forms a straight line **(8).**

SWEET PLEATS BLOUSE

Skill Level: Intermediate

SUPPLIES

- 2 yards of mediumweight linen
- Threads: coordinating all-purpose, thick hand-quilting & contrasting Perle cotton
- Embroidery needle
- Removable fabric marker
- Cardboard scrap

PREPARE

Using the Sweet Pleats Blouse pattern, cut out the blouse pattern pieces according to your measurements on the chart below.

From the linen, cut two of pattern piece A (blouse front), one pattern piece B (blouse yoke) on the fold, one pattern piece C (back bodice), two of pattern piece D (sleeve), two of pattern piece E (front neckline facing), one pattern piece F (back neckline facing) on the fold and two of pattern piece G (cuff).

Mark all notches by snipping no more than ¼" into the fabric, and staystitch ¼" from the edge on the front bodice and back yoke necklines.

CONSTRUCT

To assemble the back yoke and back bodice, follow the cartridge pleating instructions instructions Fold and press the fabric at the back yoke lower edge, which will be the background fabric. Fold and press the back bodice, mark the sewing and pleating lines, and then stitch to notches as on the cartridge pleating swatch, leaving the center portion unattached **(9).** Hand stitch the pleats following the instructions on page 43-44.

With right sides together, stitch the front bodice and back yoke shoulder seams. Serge- or zigzag-finish the seam allowances as one; press toward the back.

Stitch the back neckline facing to front neckline facing at the shoulders; press open the seam allowances.

With right sides together, stitch the neckline facing to the bodice using a ¼" seam allowance. Clip into the seam allowance. Turn the facing to the wrong side, press. Fold under and press ¼" all along the facing outer raw edge.

Unfold the neckline facing at the front-bodice center edge; stitch the front bodice pieces using a ½" seam allowance. Finish the seam allowances and press open, on both the facing and the bodice.

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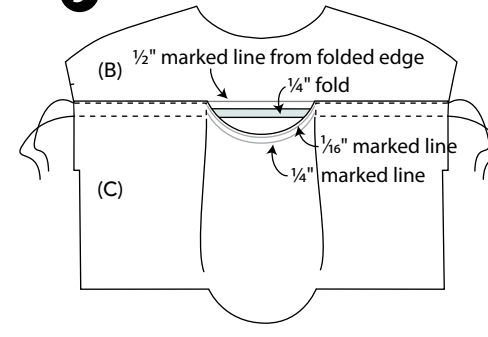


SWEET PLEATS BLOUSE PATTERN SIZING

	XS	S	M	L	XL	XXL
RTW SIZES	0–2	4–6	8–10	12–14	16–18	20–22
BUST	30"–31½"	33"–34¾"	36¼"–37¾"	39½"–41"	43½"–45½"	46"–47¼"

Stitch the facing edge onto the bodice. Stitch two rows of topstitching along the center seam of the front bodice, from the neckline upper edge to the lower edge and ¼" from the seamline on either side **(10).**

Attach the sleeves per the process for attaching the back bodice to yoke. Fold and press the fabric and mark sewing and pleating lines. Stitch the sleeve to the bodice at the shoulder, leaving the pleating fabric free **(11).**

Create cartridge pleats along the sleeve upper edge.

Fold the sleeve cuffs in half and press. Stitch a row of gathering stitches along the sleeve lower edge; leave long thread tails at the beginning and end of the seam. Gather the sleeve edge to match the cuff length by pulling the bobbin thread slightly **(12).** With right sides together, stitch the gathered sleeve edge to cuff raw edges. Fold the cuff away from the sleeve; press.

Stitch the side seams, finish the seam allowances and press open. Fold the sleeve cuffs in half toward the sleeve wrong side, making sure to enclose the raw edges. Slipstitch the folded edge by hand to close the cuffs.

To hem the blouse, fold the blouse lower edge ¼" toward the wrong side; press. Fold the edge another 2" toward the wrong side; press, and then and stitch.

FINISH

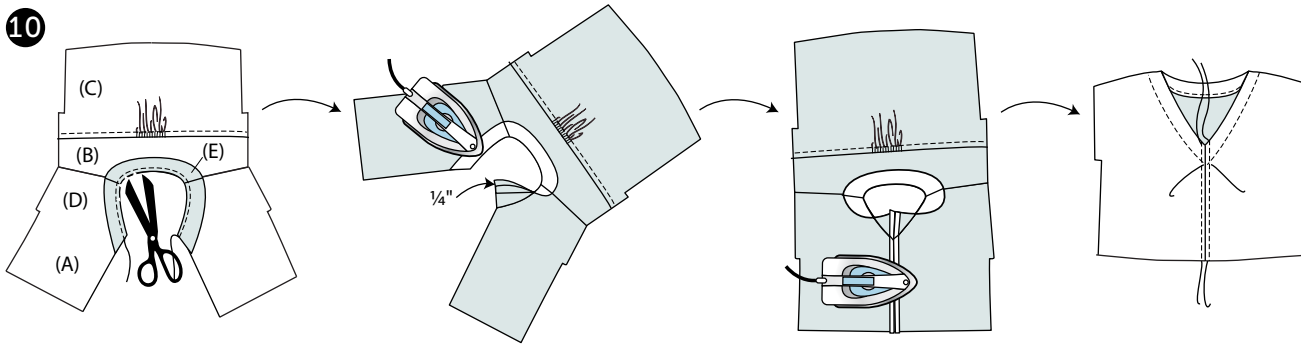
To create one braided cord, cut three 30" lengths of contrasting Perle cotton thread. Using an embroidery needle, thread the Perle cotton strands where the ties will be attached, pulling each length halfway through. Braid the threads together, and tie a knot at the end, leaving 1" unbraided.

From the cardboard, cut a 1½"×2¼" rectangle. Punch a 1" hole in the cardboard center; if needed, use pattern piece K for a template.

Wrap thread around the cardboard length. Tie a piece of thread around the tassel threads through the center hole, and tie the braided cord end to the tassel just under the knot, wrapping tightly so the cord is securely attached to the tassel.

Cut the threads at either end of the cardboard, fold the tassel in half, and arrange the strands to cover the braided cord end. Wrap a length of thread tightly around the tassel upper edge, tying it off and threading the loose end into the tassel. Repeat to create the remaining braided cord tie. S

10



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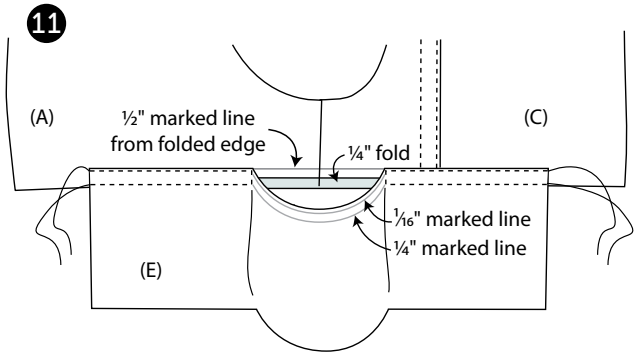

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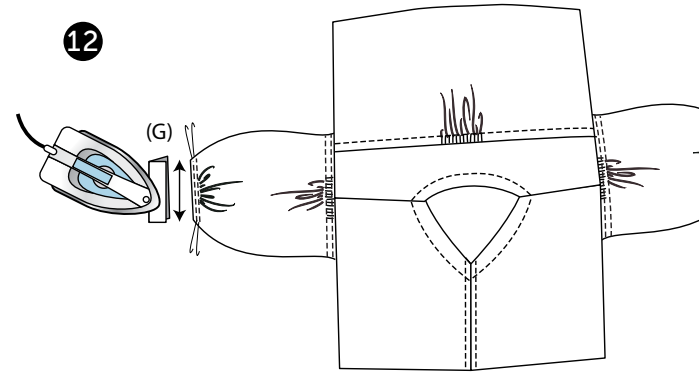

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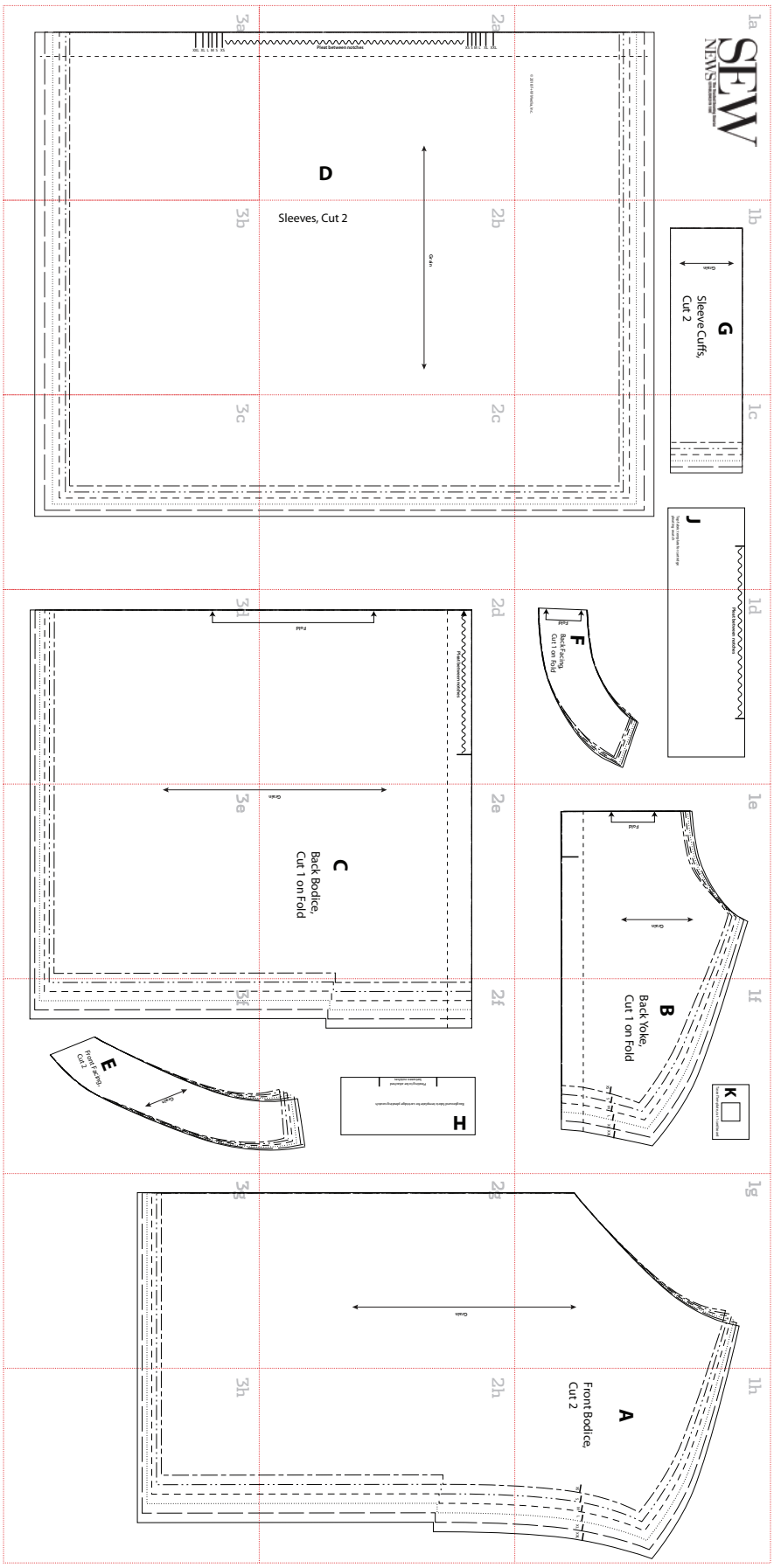
Sweet Pleats Blouse Layout

24 pages: 1a–1h, 2a–2h, 3a–3h

Print this page first at 100%, then measure the 2" test square before printing full pattern.

Seam allowances: ½"
Neckline seam allowance: ¼"
Sleeve hem allowance: 2¼"
Seam allowances where pleats are attached: 1" for fabric layer to be pleated and ¾" for background fabric layer

2" Test Square



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1a

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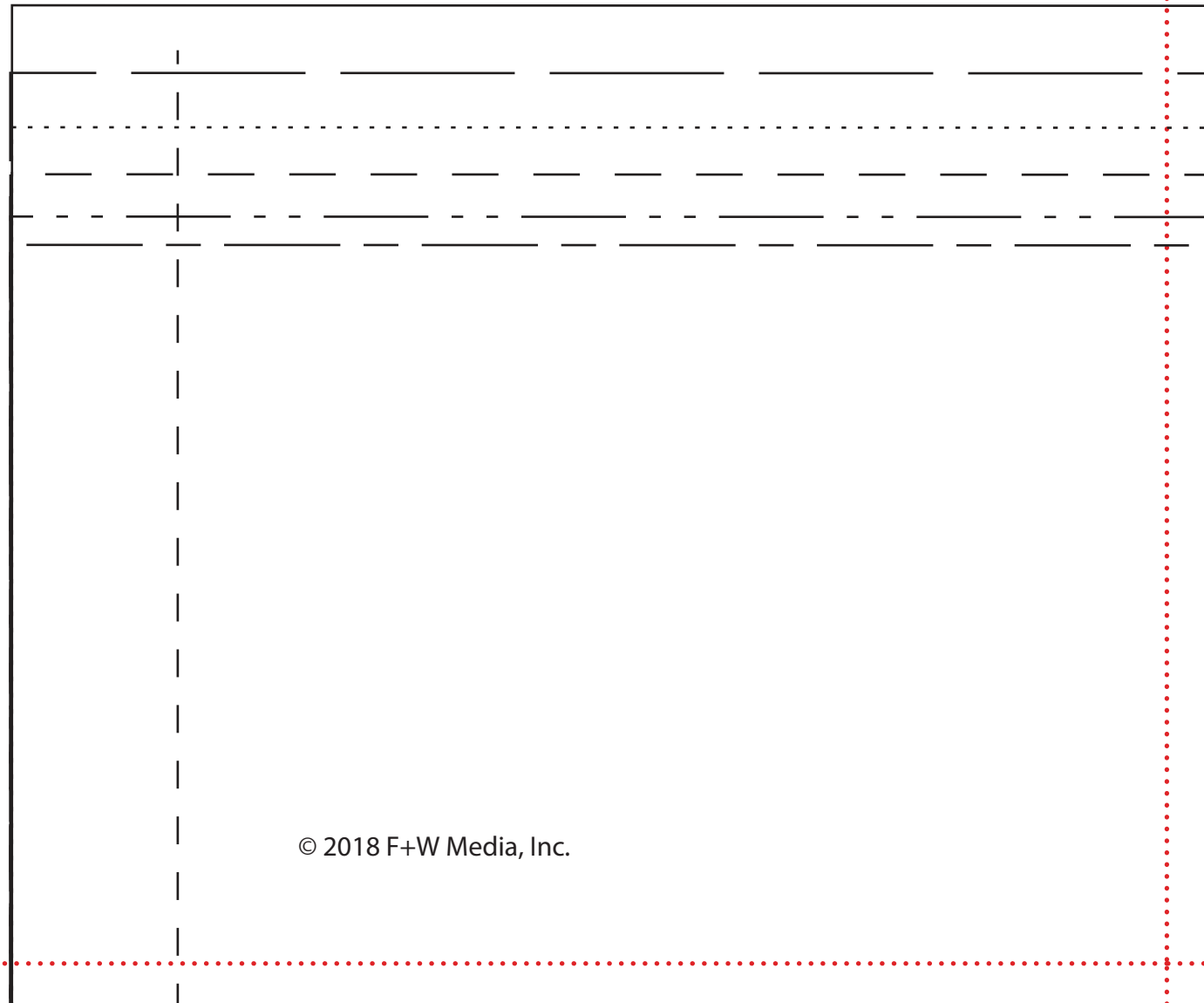

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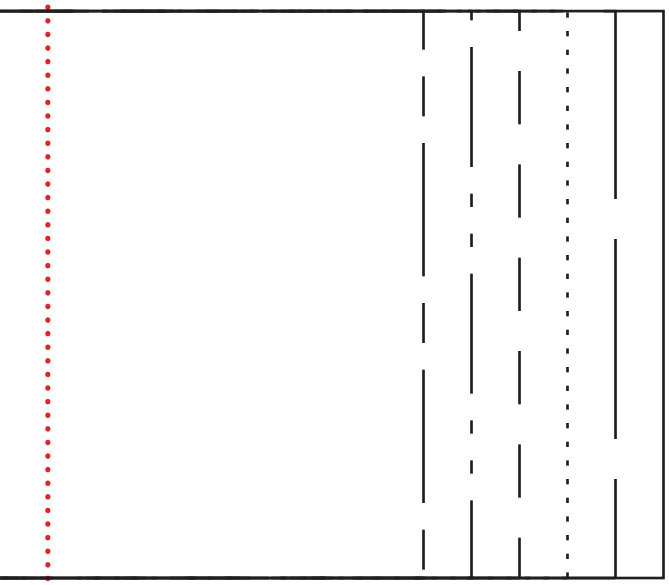
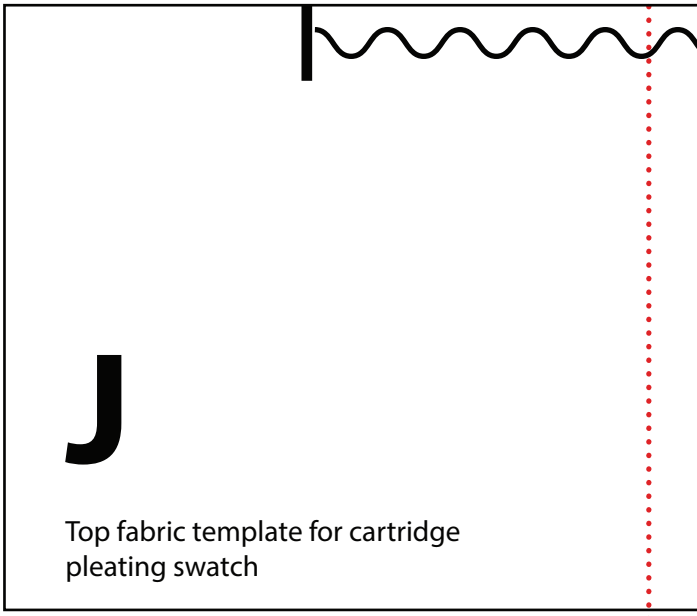
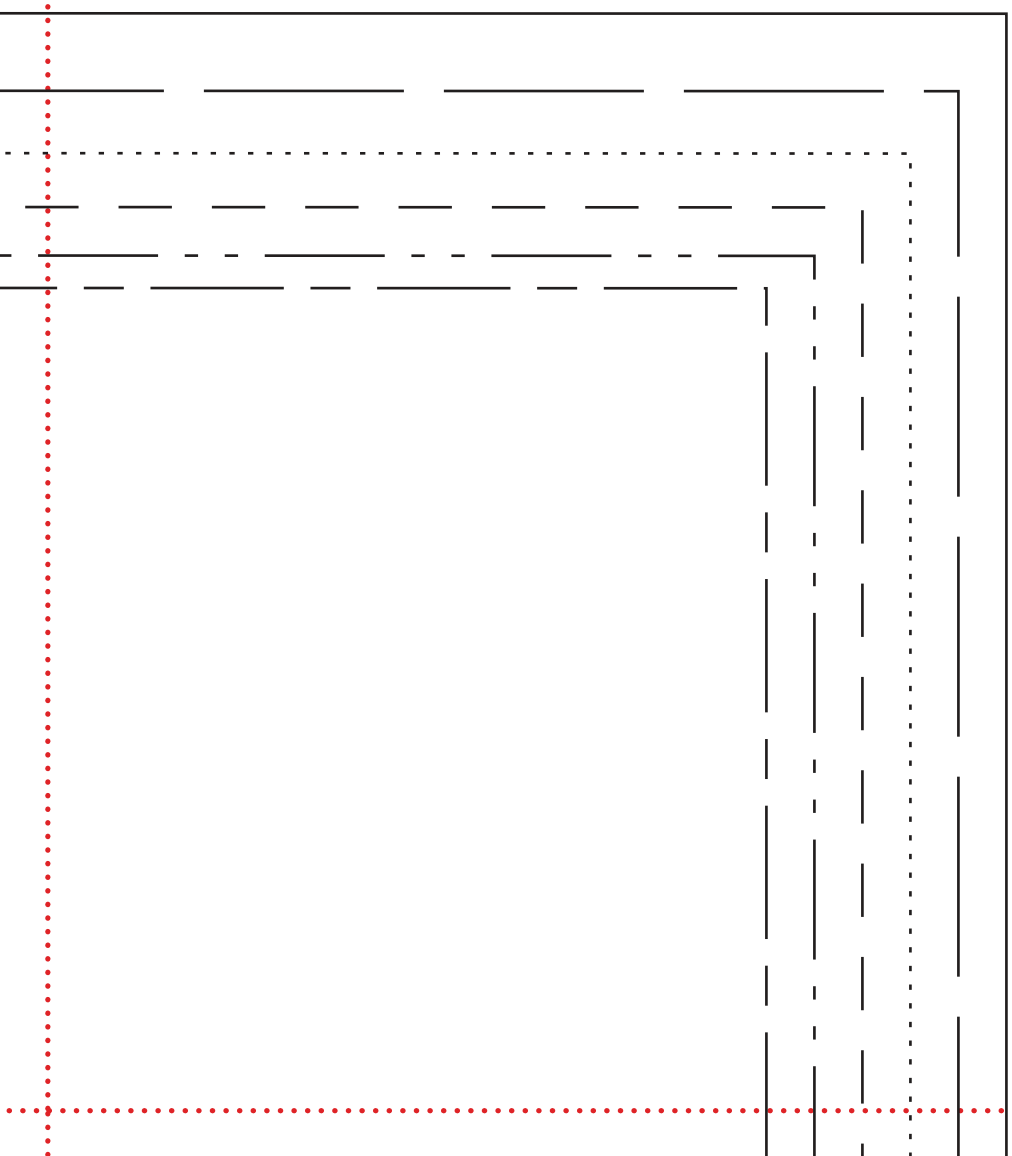


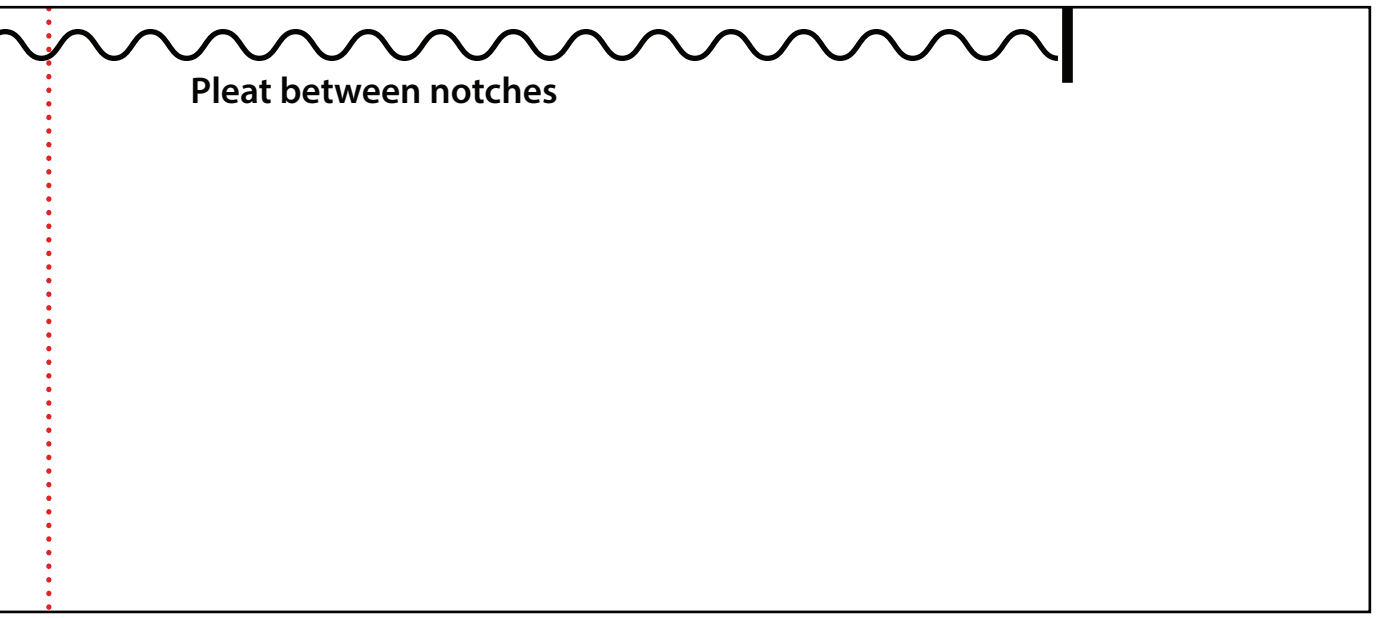


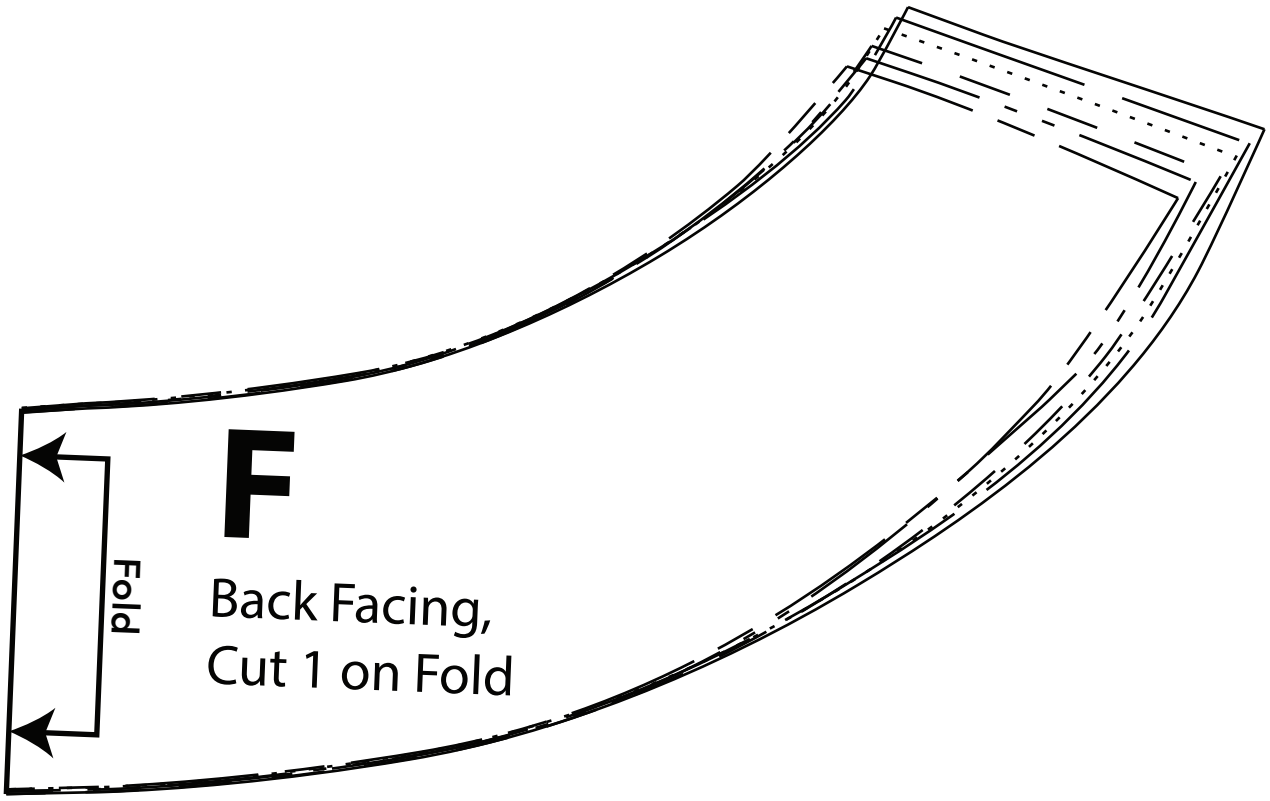
J

Top fabric template for cartridge pleating swatch



1d





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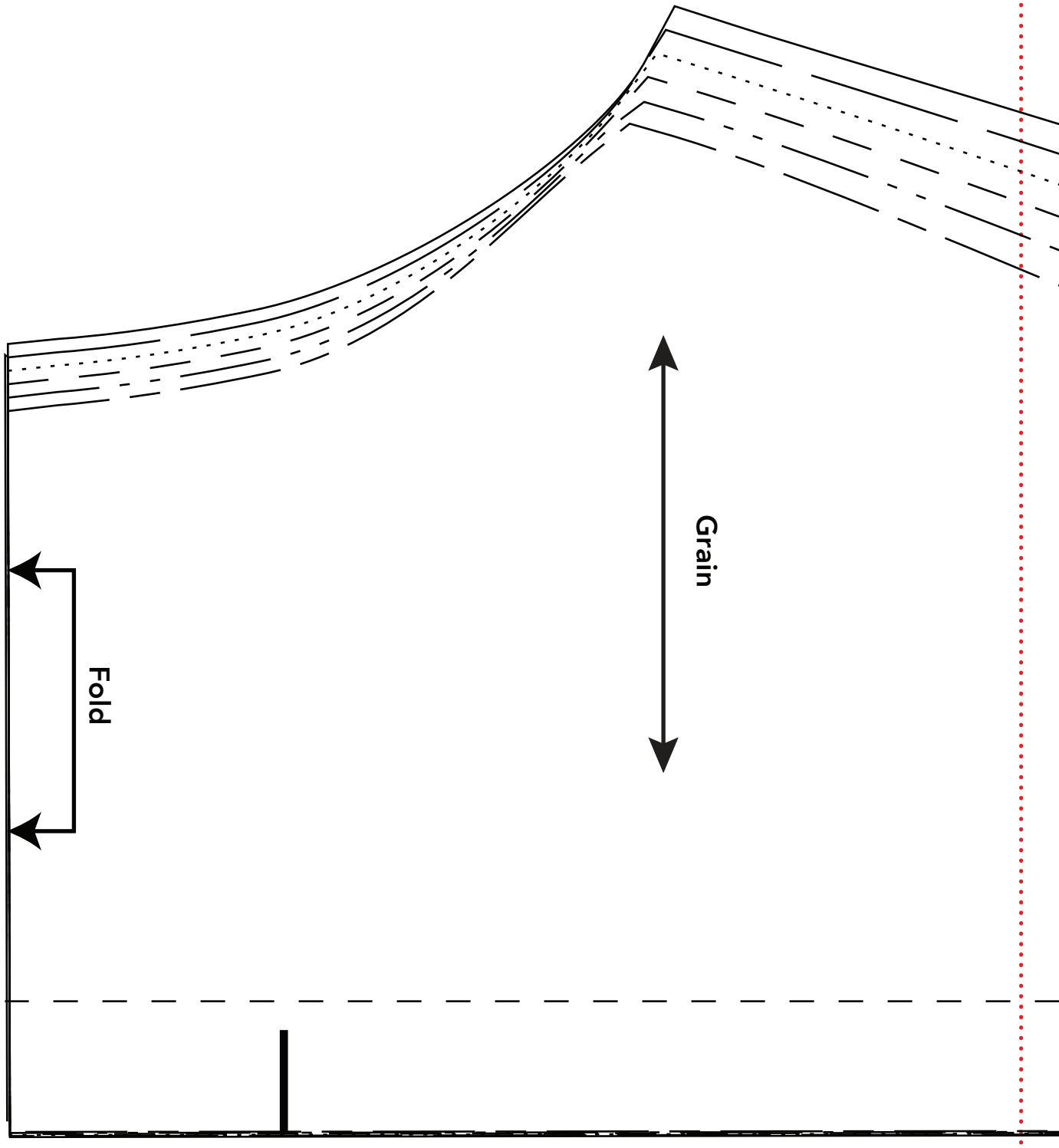
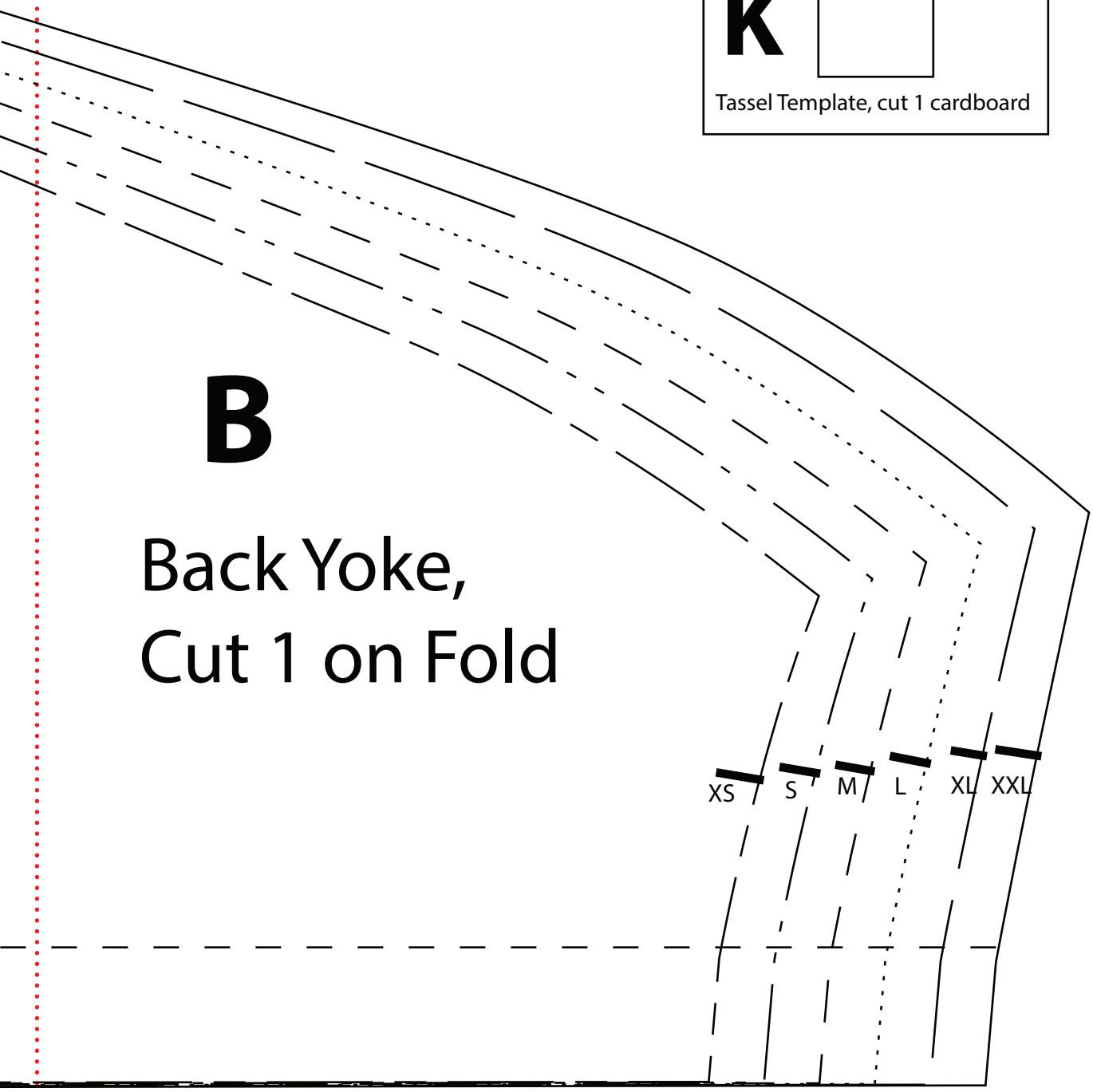


K

Tassel Template, cut 1 cardboard

B

Back Yoke, Cut 1 on Fold



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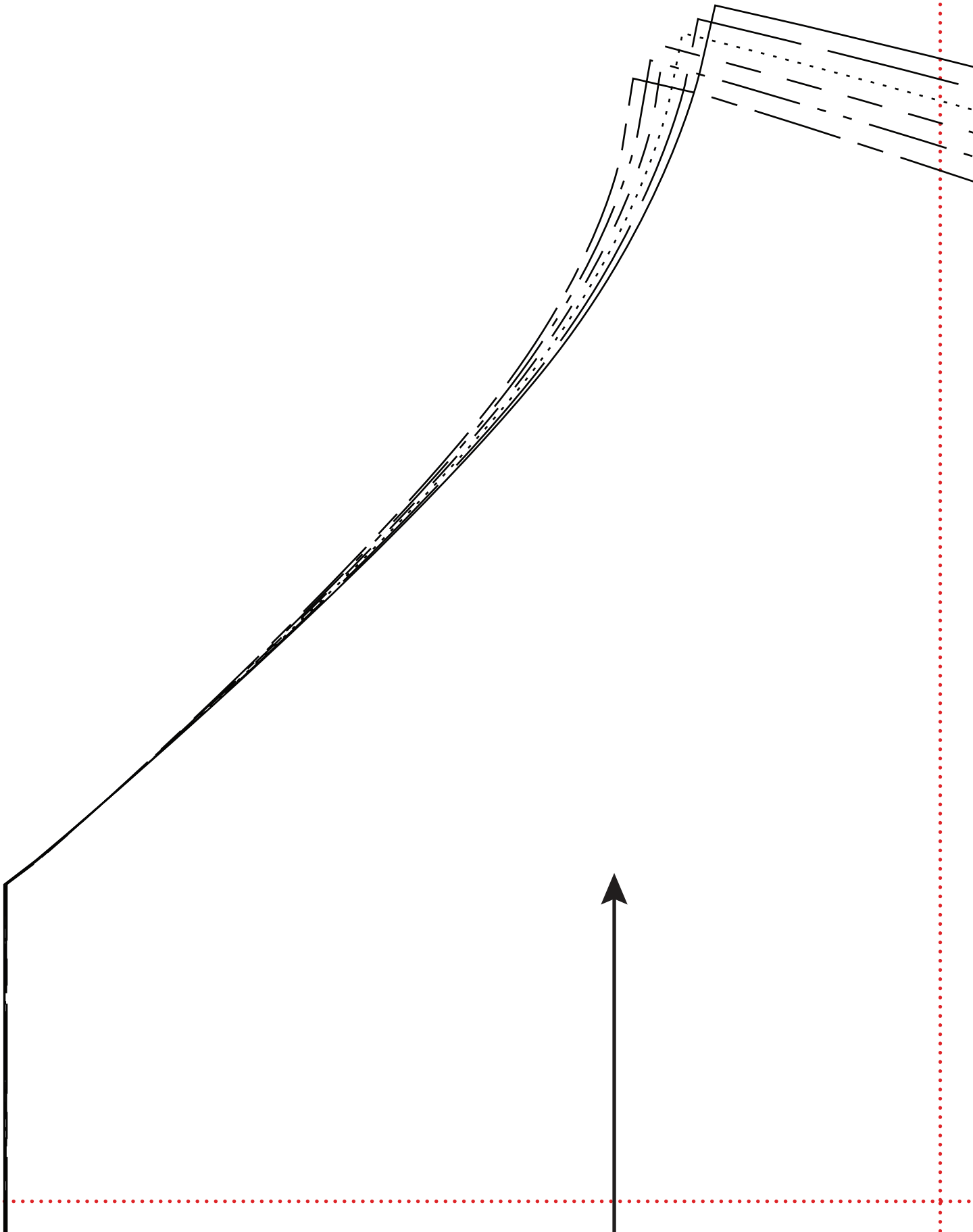
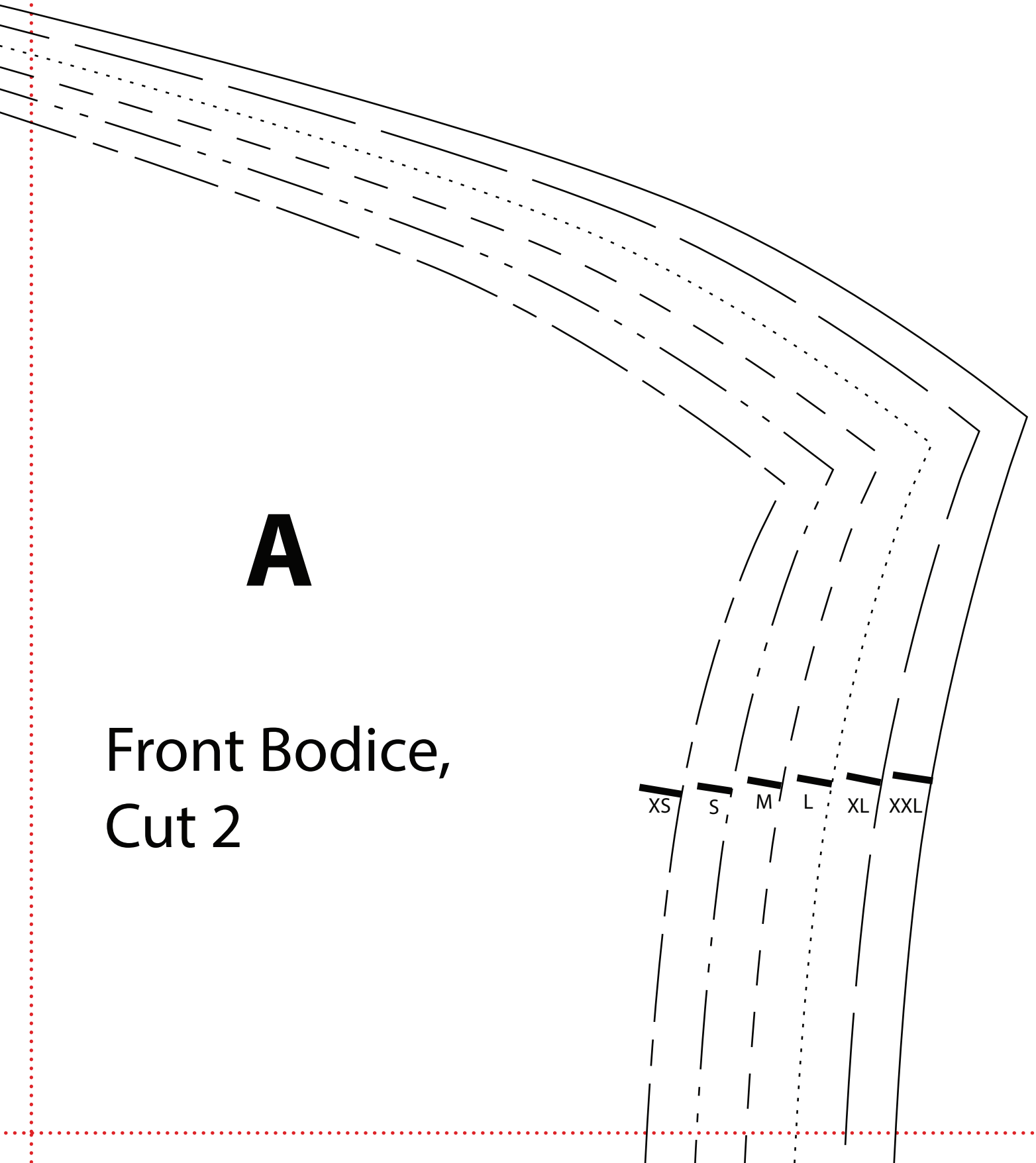




A

Front Bodice, Cut 2

Pleat between notches

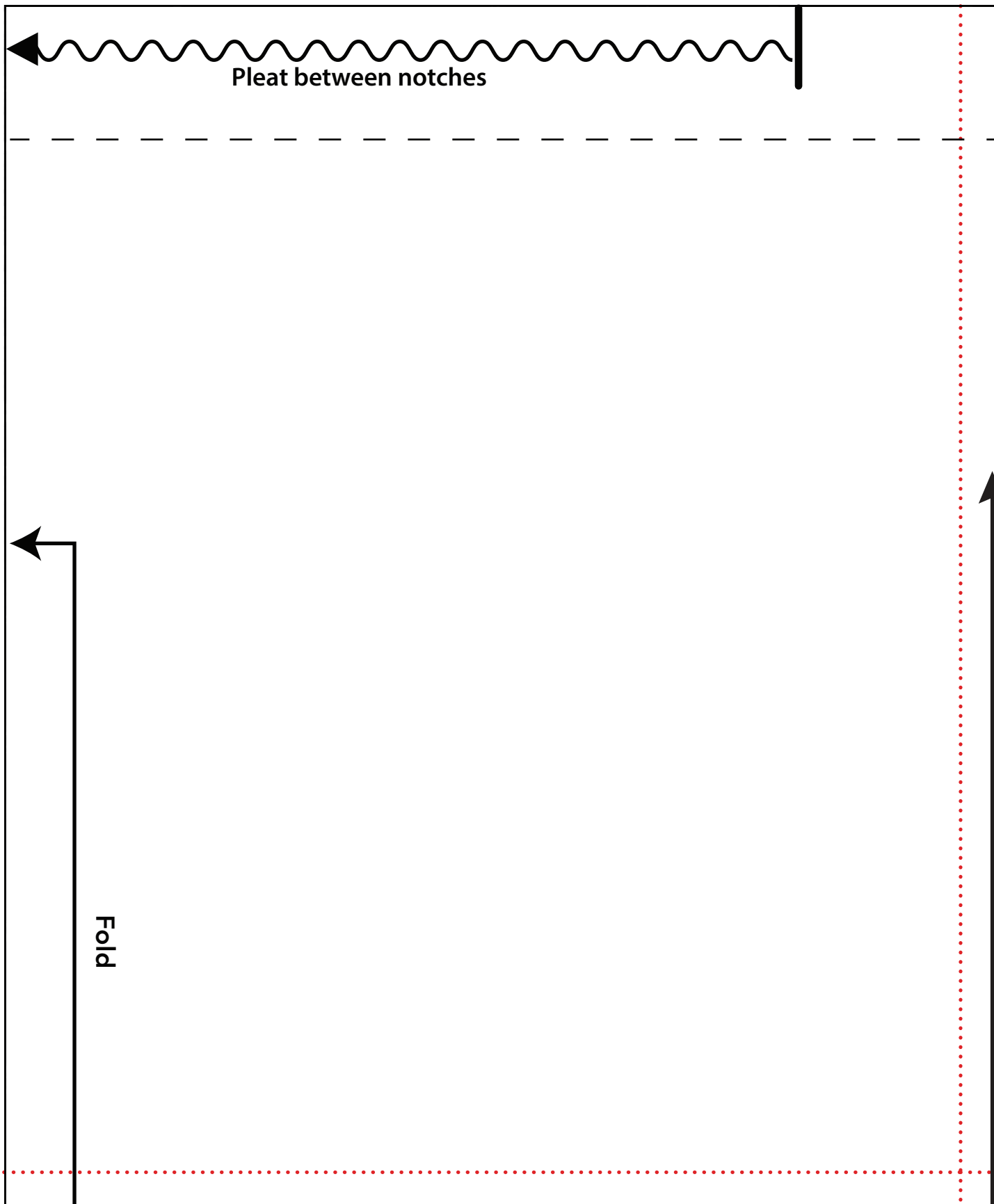
XS S M L XL XXL

D

Sleeves, Cut 2

2c

2d



2e

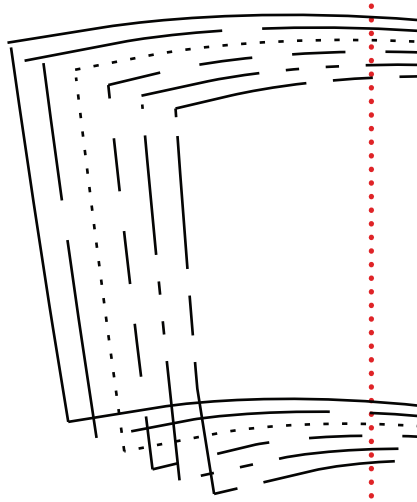
C

Back Bodice,
Cut 1 on Fold

H

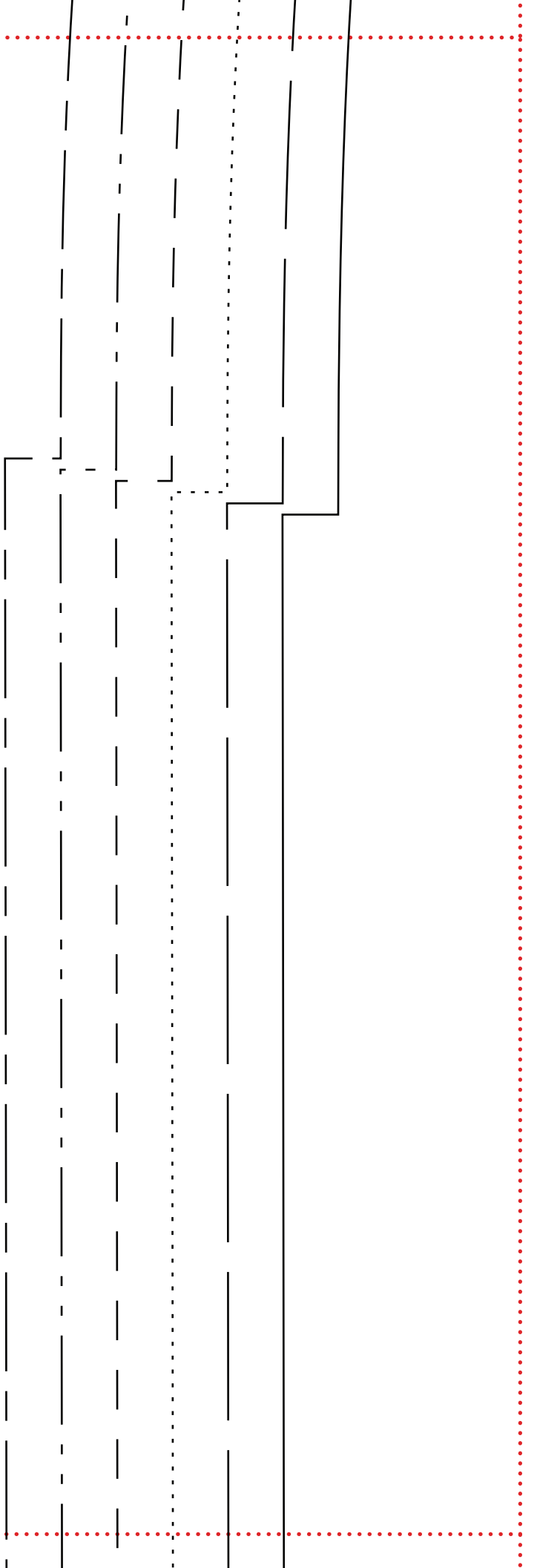
Bacgkround fabric template for cartridge pleating swatch

Pleating to be attached
between notches



Grain

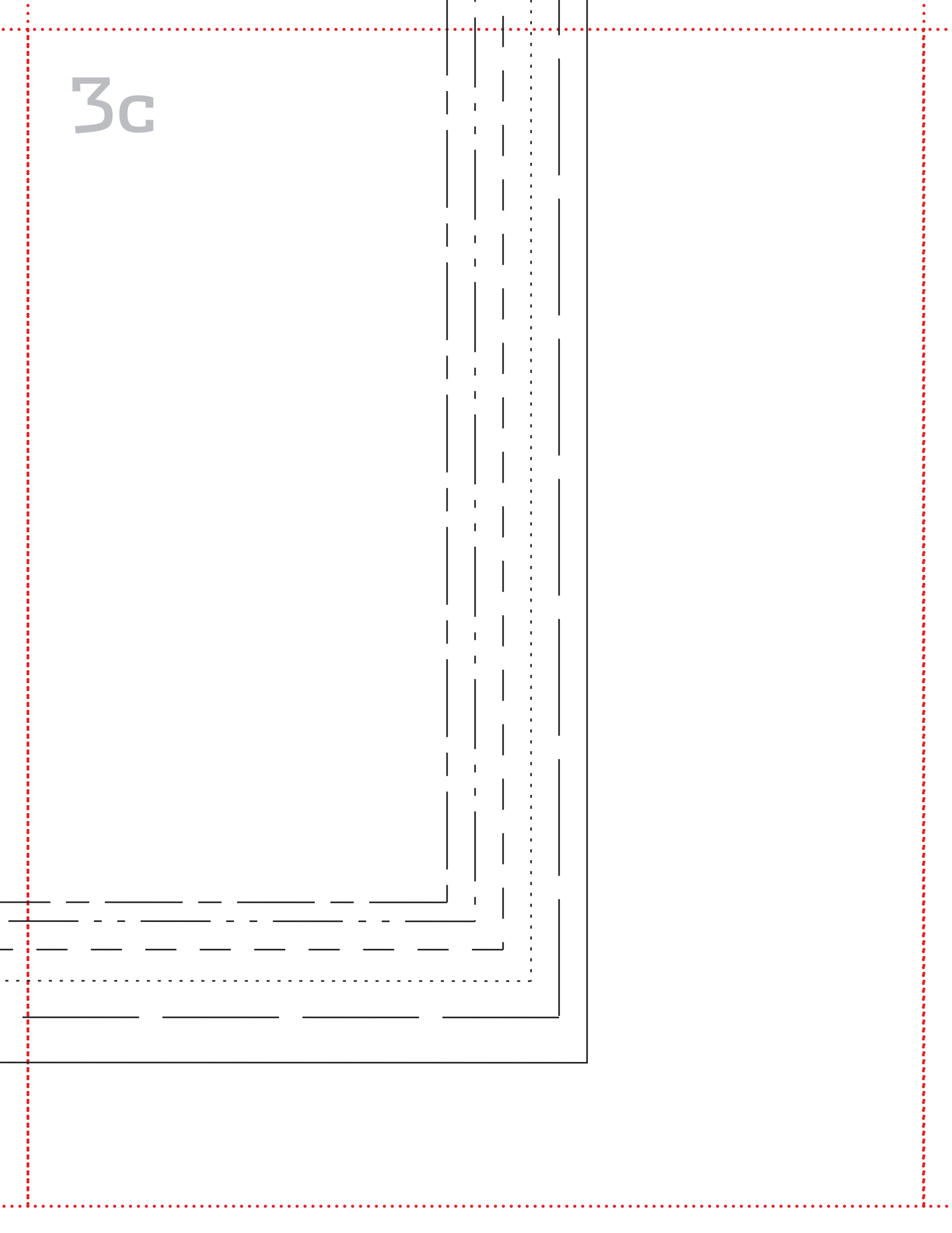
2h



3a

XS
S
M
L
XL
XXL

3b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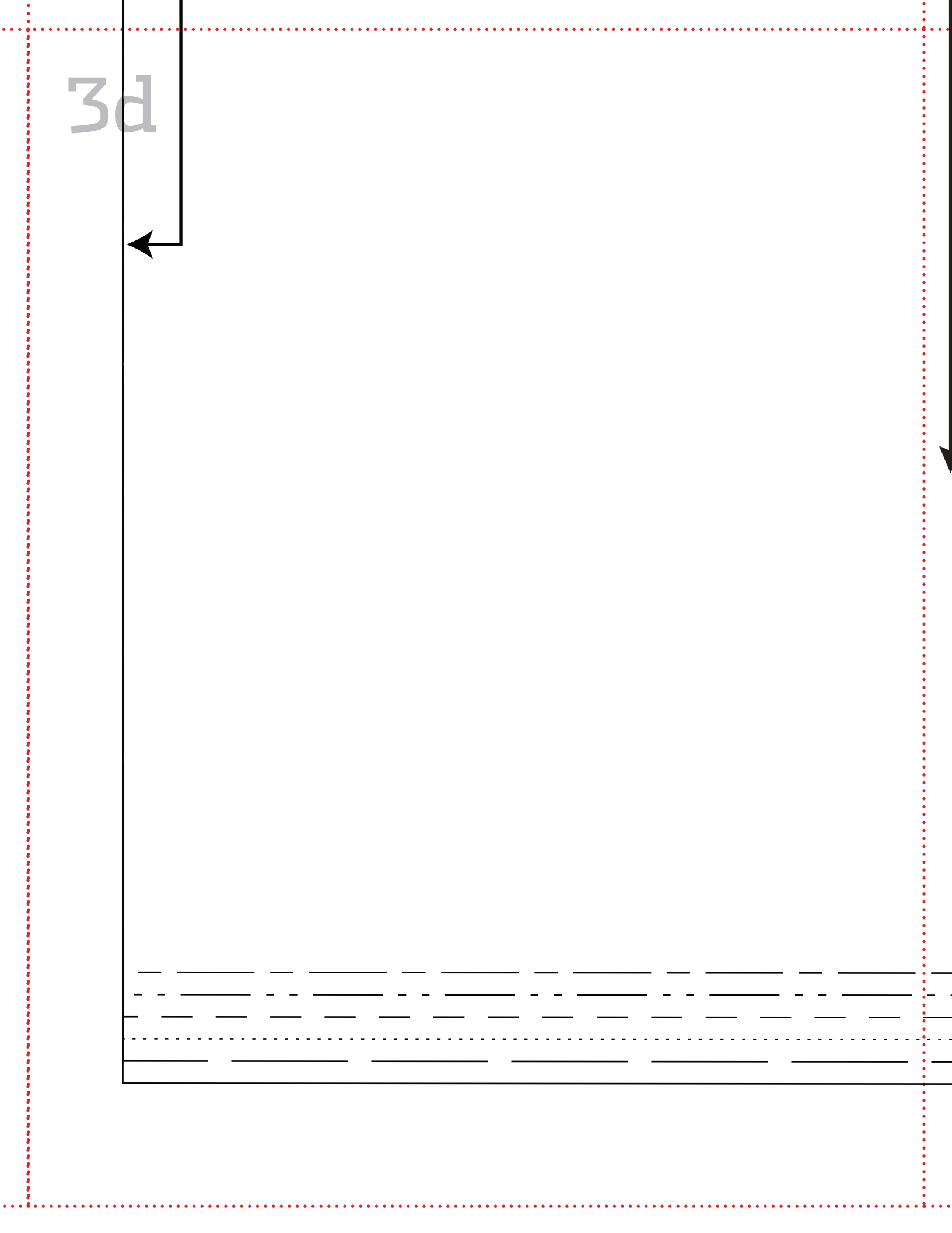
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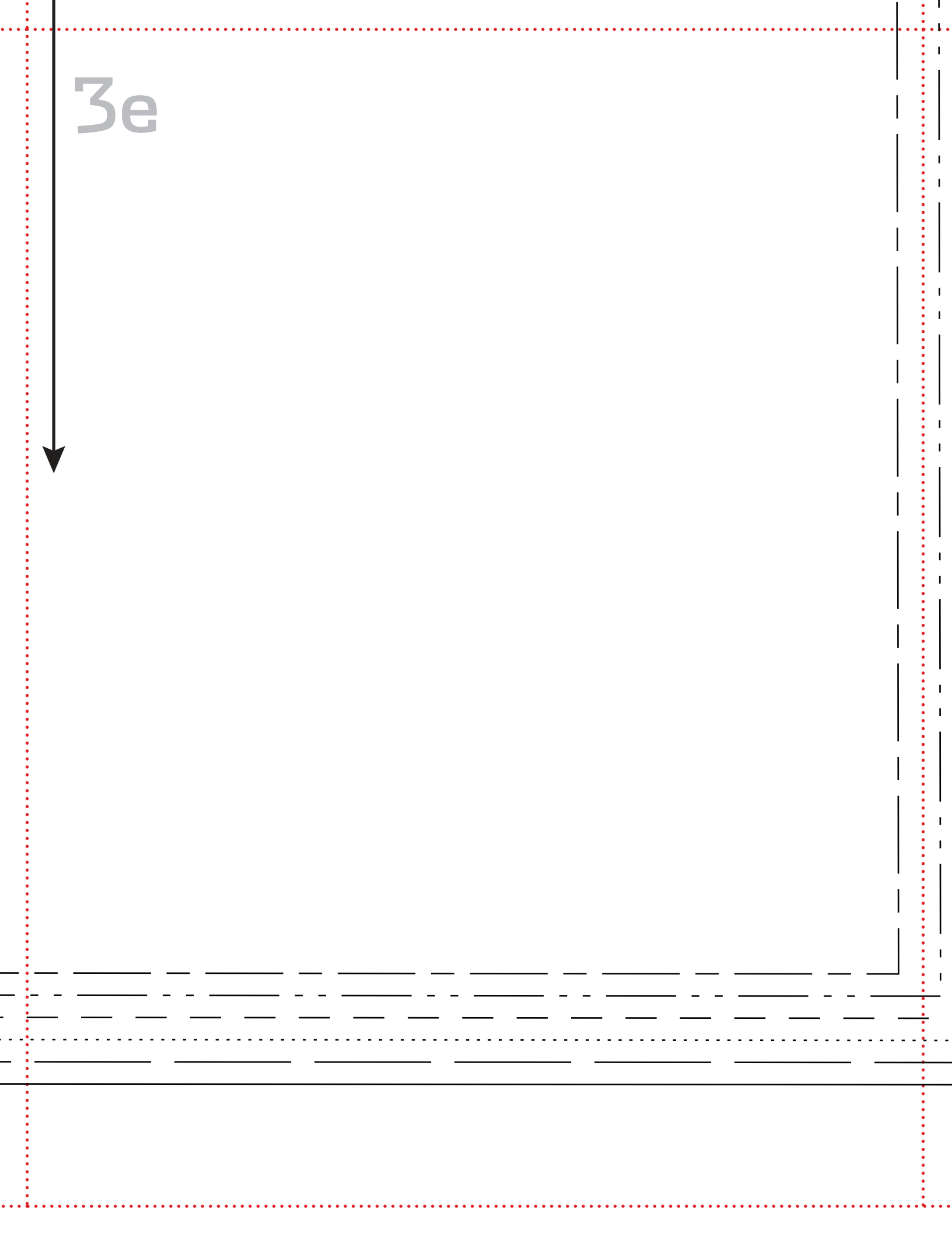
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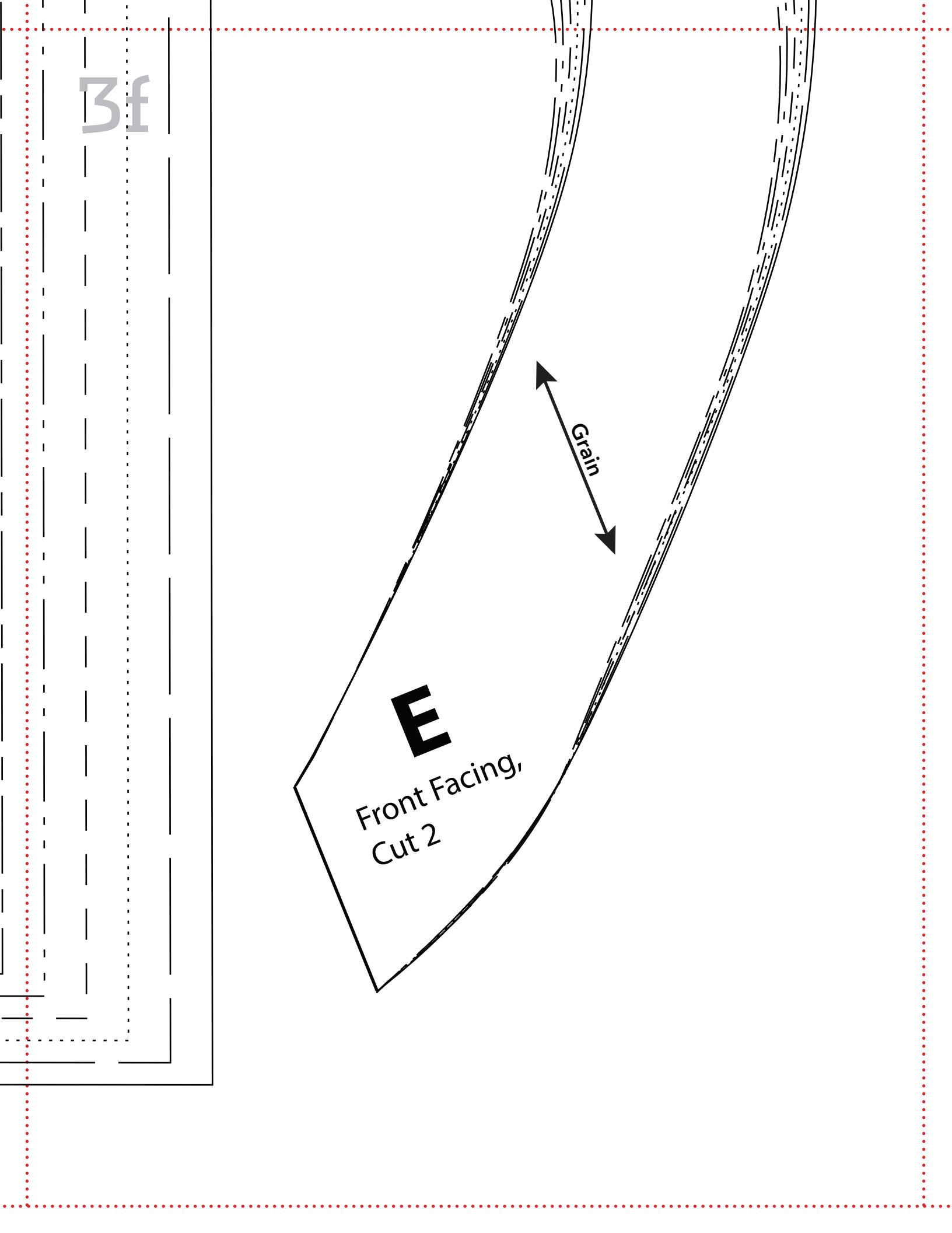
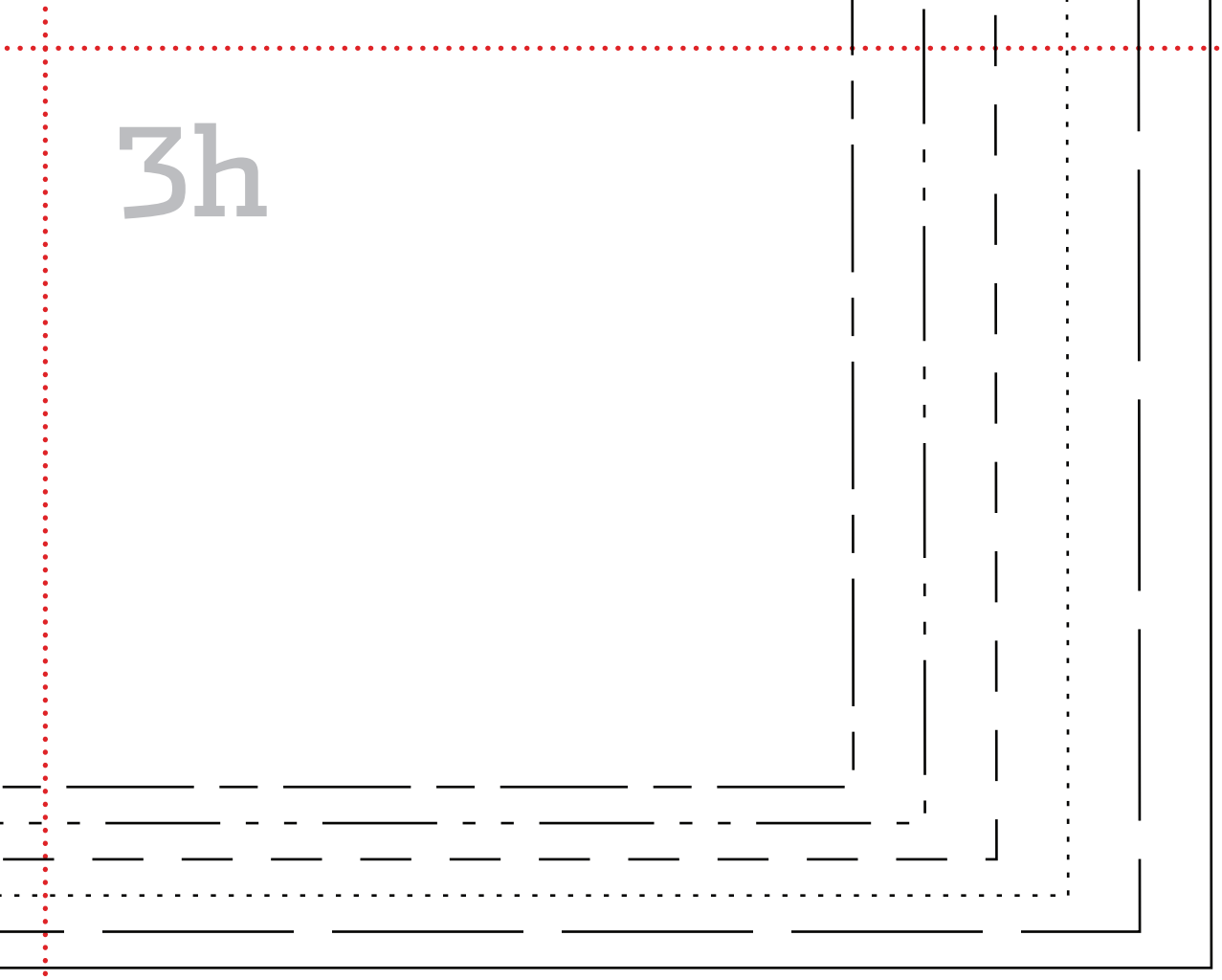

3f
Grain
E
Front Facing,
Cut 2

3g


3h